

ER 61-2182/a

23 MAR 1961

Mr. William Benton  
Encyclopaedia Britannica  
Suite 702  
342 Madison Avenue  
New York 17, N. Y.

Dear Bill:

Many thanks for your letter of 16 March  
and for the copies of the two letters that you  
wrote to the President of the National Academy  
of Sciences in Peking.

I very much appreciate your thoughtfulness  
in keeping me informed on this and, should I get  
an opportunity, I will be most happy to put in a  
good word for you.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

Allen W. Dulles  
Director

O/DCI/[ ] (21 Mar 61)

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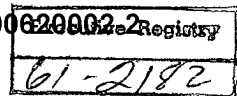
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(EXECUTIVE SECRETARY FILE)



ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA  
342 MADISON AVENUE  
SUITE 702  
NEW YORK 17, N.Y.

WILLIAM BENTON  
PUBLISHER & CHAIRMAN

March 16, 1961

Dear Allen:

Our quick visit in Washington last weekend makes me think you might find a minute to glance at a letter I wrote some months back to the President of the National Academy in Peiping. Harold Wilson took me to call on the Charge in the Chinese embassy in London and we transmitted this letter through him. Harold Wilson is now making inquiries for me from the Chinese embassy in Moscow. I send you this letter so that you will see I do indeed, as publisher of the Britannica, have something to offer to the Chinese. I hope you will keep looking for some angle through which I can get the visa, even if American journalists are denied it. I would be happy to promise not to write any journalistic articles, if this is the desire of the Chinese. I spoke both to Ed Murrow and Chet Bowles about the question and both have promised to try to help me get the visa - if any possible opening develops.

Sincerely,

*Bill*  
William Benton

The Honorable Allen Dulles  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D. C.

Dictated in Los Angeles  
Transcribed in New York

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6th July, 1959.

Your Excellency,

The enclosed letter is a copy of one that I left at the office of the Chinese Charge d'Affaires in London with a request to Mr. Chou, the Second Secretary, that he should forward it to you. I send it as a confirmation.

As you will see from that letter, it is my very great hope that I shall be given an opportunity to visit you in China and to make the arrangements that are necessary before the articles on China in the Encyclopaedia Britannica can be revised and improved.

Yours sincerely,

William Benton.

His Excellency Guo Mo Ruo,  
President,  
Academy of Sciences,  
Peking,  
People's Republic of China.

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25th June, 1959.

Your Excellency,

As owner and publisher of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which as you may know is served by two editorial offices, one in Chicago and one in London, I am seeking to visit China. I have already applied for a visa in a cable addressed to His Excellency Chou En-lai through the Office of the Charge d'Affaires of the People's Republic in London. I attach a copy of that cable.

Although this cable was despatched last February, and I have had no reply to it, I am still hopeful that the People's Republic will grant me a visa. For me it is a matter of outstanding importance that we should reopen cultural relations between our two countries. As you will know, the Encyclopaedia Britannica is generally regarded by Western scholars as the premier work of reference in the English language. But because the communication between the United States and the People's Republic has been so difficult the Britannica's present articles about China, which total more than 150,000 words, are badly out of date. We are eager to make necessary revisions, and indeed regard it as our duty to do so, for our editors are aware of the dramatic developments which have occurred within China in the last ten years. My visit, I would hope, would pave the way for co-operation.

Four years ago when I visited the U.S.S.R. and Poland I had many opportunities to talk with those who were engaged in the educational field as well as with those who were concerned with the production of the Soviet encyclopaedias. My visit bore fruit in several ways. Through my publications and speeches on my return I was able to enlighten the American and British public about cultural and educational developments in the U.S.S.R., and since my return Mr. John Armitage, our British Editor, has been able to maintain the contacts I had made. In particular he has exchanged information and illustrative material with Mr. L. Shaumian, Deputy Chief Editor of the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia, and only last week he returned from a visit to Warsaw where he spent much time at the State Publishing House (Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe). There he was discussing in detail administrative

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problems arising out of the production of large encyclopaedias. Today, he tells me he has received a letter from the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia saying that if he can manage to visit Moscow he will be most welcome.

Naturally after a visit to China and my conversations with you I would hope to be in a position to propose to my editorial staffs means by which they might follow on my visit and thus effect improvement to the articles on China in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. I am prepared to discuss with you the help we might render to you and to enterprises of the People's Republic by the supply of information, of books, of illustrative material and, if you wished, by sending to China one or two members of my editorial staff to inform you about the mechanical side and procedures we have devised to help us in our work.

I earnestly hope that these proposals may commend themselves to you. It cannot be right from your standpoint, as well as that of world scholarship, for the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which is continuously revised and printed each year, to be publishing such out-of-date information about China. When I bear in mind that our encyclopaedia is consulted all over the world by English-speaking peoples and indeed by peoples of other tongues, I am emboldened to hope that my wish to visit your country and to open up communications between us will have your esteemed support.

I would hope to visit you in the fall or next spring if Your Excellency can assist me in securing a visa.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) WILLIAM BENTON.

Mrs. Huellenguo Guo Mo Rao,  
President,  
Academy of Sciences,  
People's Republic of China.

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